

Lesson 18

6–24–10 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 464–467.

Summary

Law and rules are part of all communities and societies. The many countries and nations of this world all have their own laws. There are even tribal laws and laws amongst thieves (*e.g.*, do not steal from each other). *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) and other laws are the same in concept. The only difference is the source. For example, secular law stems from the people's opinion (such as via Congress or a founding body), but *shari'ah* stems from revelation of God (the All-Wise) and *ahadith* (traditions).

Islam gives people freedom, but this freedom has limitations. One aspect of *shari'ah* is to help people identify these limitations. In the United States, people say that there is freedom of speech. Ok, there is a certain “freedom” of speech, but there are also limitations. The case law provides a plethora of examples where public good or other reasons are stated to limit speech in certain situations and places.

The U.S. laws also give other freedoms but not without limitations. Look, there is a reason jails and penalties exist. You cannot just do anything you want. You have to follow the rules of the country, state, city, etc. In Islam, the same concept applies. Islam gives the basic freedoms of 1) life, 2) will, and 3) work.^{[1](#)}

However, these freedoms have limitations. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said that *the dunya* (world) *has to be a prison for you*. What does this mean? Should we live in a jail cell? No, but we have to know our limitations. We surely are being tested in this world, and the Lord (the All-Merciful) has sent us guidance.

Within this guidance, we find the guidelines of *shari'ah*. A lot of the limitations of *shari'ah* must be self-imposed by Muslims. For example, once I met some engineers for work. One of these engineers was born and grew up in Iran, but now he works and lives in the United States. In a relaxed tone, he told me that he drinks alcohol. He was not worried about getting caught and harbored no fear. Should one avoid

sin because of the fear of government or the fear of God (the All-Beneficent)? Whom do we worship? We should always be cognizant of the fact that Allah (the All-Knowing) is always watching.

We must not exceed the limits and we must restrain ourselves to be just to our own souls and for the love of God (the All-Praiseworthy). The following are verses from the **Qur'an** that beautifully convey truths that are relevant to this discussion: (2:256), *inter alia*,

“There is no compulsion in religion: rectitude has become distinct from error.” (76:3),

“Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful.” (10:99),

inter alia,

“Would you then force people until they become faithful?” (49:13),

“O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you. Indeed Allah is all-knowing, all-aware.” (30:30),

“So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind (There is no altering Allah's creation; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know.)” (See Jalali, pages 464–465).

Accordingly, we should willingly embrace *shari'ah* and do our utmost to follow the laws daily. However, when it comes to application and following the rules, there are seven conditions one should keep in mind: 1) maturity (everyone is responsible when he or she becomes mature), 2) *aql* (intellect or reasoning; an insane person is not responsible), 3) not being feeble in a particular situation or subject, 4) willingness (one must not be forced), 5) intention, 6) should not bring harm (*e.g.*, the act should not bring harm to someone else), and 7) the act should be possible (meaning, being able to materialize). (Jalali, page 466).

Generally, these are basic conditions that apply to Islamic worship, ethics, and transactions. Allah (the All-Wise) sent us the last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad and the Imams (peace be upon them all and their family) as guidance.

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion.” (Qur'an (5:3)).

All in all, we have been given Islam, including its regulations, as help or assistance. If we choose to follow the laws, then it will benefit ourselves in this world and the hereafter. And if we can help ourselves, then we can help our families (such as our children) and others.

“O you who have faith! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire.” (Qur'an (66:6)).

[1.](#) When considering freedoms, one must be cognizant of the fact that Allah (the All-Powerful) is always in the picture. He is integral to everything and continually sustains us and the Universe.

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